

Remarks

Claims 1-11 and 13-32 are in the application. Claims 1, 11, and 23 are in independent form.

Claims 1-5 and 7-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) for anticipation by Holbrook (US Pat. No. 4,612,663). Claim 6 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) for obviousness over Holbrook (US Pat. No. 4,612,663) in view of Cowieson (US Pat. No. 6,198,826). Applicant responds as follows.

Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the computer speaker system includes two pairs of inputs for receiving from the audio sub-system control circuit at least a first one of two pairs of audio input signals. The two pairs of inputs allow the computer speaker system to receive either two stereo channels or four audio channels from a multimedia computer. Outputs deliver distinct audio output signals to each of four audio speakers, a first pair of the audio speakers receiving audio output signals corresponding to the first one of two pairs of audio signals. As further recited in the claim, a proxy audio signal component coupled to the outputs provides a pair of distinct proxy audio output signals to a second pair of the audio speakers whenever the inputs receive only the first one of two pairs of audio input signals.

The Examiner cites Holbrook as disclosing each of the features recited in claim 1. Applicant notes that neither Holbrook, nor any of the other cited references, describes a computer speaker system that includes two pairs of inputs for receiving from an audio sub-system control circuit at least a first one of two pairs of audio input signals. Holbrook shows a system that includes only one pair (left and right) of audio inputs. In the passage cited by the Examiner, Holbrook states that one of the illustrated amplifiers may be connected to a back speaker, rather than a front speaker. Holbrook further includes several amplifiers, but they receive signals from the one pair of left and right inputs, not from the "the audio sub-system control circuit" as recited in the claim. Applicant also notes that the reference Ho includes inputs from receiving audio signals

from different audio sources (e.g., audio sound card or external audio source), not for receiving two or four channels from a computer audio circuit.

Furthermore, applicant notes that Holbrook provides no teaching or suggestion of providing a pair of distinct proxy audio output signals to a second pair of the audio speakers whenever the inputs receive only the first one of two pairs of audio input signals. Holbrook describes a system with only one pair of audio inputs. Holbrook provides no teaching or suggestion of two pairs of audio inputs. As a result, Holbrook provides no teaching or suggestion of providing a pair of distinct proxy audio output signals whenever the inputs receive only the first one of two pairs of audio input signals. Accordingly, applicant submits that claim 1 is patentably distinct from the cited references and requests, therefore, that this rejection be withdrawn.

Applicant believes claims 2-10 are allowable as dependents of an allowable base claim. In addition, applicant believes selected claims are further allowable for the following reasons.

Claim 2 recites that the second pair of the audio speakers receive audio output signals corresponding to the second one of the two pairs of audio input signals whenever the inputs receive both the first and second pairs of audio input signals. Holbrook provides no teaching or suggestion of an audio system with four inputs that receive signals from the audio sub-system control circuit. Rather, Holbrook shows a system with only two inputs. Applicant submits, therefore, that Holbrook provides no teaching or suggestion of providing signals to audio speakers according to signals being received at two pairs of inputs. Applicant requests, therefore, that the rejection of claim 2 be withdrawn.

Claims 3-5 recite particular features relating to a housing that supports the inputs and outputs and encloses the proxy audio signal component. Holbrook does not mention any housing for any element. At most, Holbrook refers to selected circuitry as being a tri-ambient synthesizer that is contained within the dotted lines of FIG. 1. Applicant submits that Holbrook does not teach or suggest the particular housing features recited in claims 3-5. More specifically, Holbrook

provides no basis for the subject matter of claim 4, in which the housing is recited as also enclosing an audio speaker. Applicant requests, therefore, that the rejections of claims 3-5 be withdrawn.

Claim 6 recites a sub-woofer housing that supports the inputs and outputs and encloses the proxy audio signal component. Neither Holbrook nor Cowieson mentions any element being contained in any housing. Applicant submits that the cited references do not teach or suggest the particular sub-woofer housing recited in claim 6. Applicant requests, therefore, that the rejection of claim 6 be withdrawn.

Claims 11-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) for anticipation by Cowieson (US Pat. No. 6,198,826). Applicant responds as follows.

Independent claim 11 and 23 have been rewritten to move into the claim bodies features that were previously recited in the claim preambles. Amended claims 11 and 23 also specifically recite four inputs that are connectable to receive four distinct audio input signals from an audio sub-system control circuit of a multimedia computer, and that the proxy audio signal component is provided to the outputs whenever audio input signals are received at only two of the four inputs. Claim 11 has also been amended to recite a switch element that selectively couples the proxy audio signal component to the outputs. The switch was originally recited in claim 12, which has been cancelled.

Applicant submits that claims 11-32 are patentably distinct from the cited reference. Each of the implementations of Cowieson shows only a right input and a left input. Cowieson provides no teaching or suggestion of an audio system with four inputs connectable to receive four distinct audio input signals from an audio sub-system control circuit of a multimedia computer, as recited in claims 11 and 23. In addition, claims 11 and 23 recite couplings between a first pair of the inputs and a first pair of the outputs to deliver to the first pair of outputs audio input signals received at the first pair of inputs. A proxy audio signal component is selectively coupled to a second pair of the outputs.

With regard to claim 11, the Examiner states that Cowieson discloses "a switch element 34." Applicant notes that element 34 in Cowieson is a Q-filter, as indicated at col. 2, line 66, and not a switch. Switches 21 and 22 of Cowieson function to switch Q-filter 34 into the circuit 10. (Col. 3, lines 2-3.) Applicant submits that Cowieson, including switches 21 and 22, provide no teaching or suggestion of "a switch element that selectively couples the proxy audio signal component to the outputs whenever audio input signals are received at only two of the four inputs," as recited in claim 11. Cowieson does not teach or suggest the recited four inputs, and so can provide no teaching or suggestion of a switch that provides a coupling dependent upon audio input signals being received at only two of the four inputs.

Claim 23 recites that particular proxy audio output signals are provided whenever audio input signals are received at only two of the four inputs. Cowieson does not teach or suggest the recited four inputs, and so can provide no teaching or suggestion of providing the particular proxy audio output signals when audio input signals are received at only two of the four inputs.

For the foregoing reasons, applicant submits that claims 11 and 23, and their dependent claims, are patentably distinct from the cited reference and request that the rejection be withdrawn. Applicant believes particular dependent claims are further patentable for the following reasons.

With regard to claim 14, Cowieson states that "Q-filter 34 is switched into the circuit 10 by a user via switches 21, 22." This suggests that switches 21,22 of Cowieson are operated manually by a user. Applicant submits that Cowieson therefore provides no teaching or suggestion of an automatic switch as recited in claim 14. Applicant requests, therefore, that the rejection of claim 14 be withdrawn.

Claims 15-18 recite particular features relating to a housing that supports the inputs and outputs and encloses the proxy audio signal component. Cowieson does not mention any element being contained in any housing. Applicant submits that Cowieson does not teach or suggest the particular

housing features recited in claims 15-18. More specifically, Cowieson provides no basis for the subject matter of claims 16 and 18, in which the housing is recited as also enclosing an audio speaker. Applicant requests, therefore, that the rejections of claims 15-18 be withdrawn.

Applicant submits that claims 24-29 are further patentably distinct for reason set forth above with regard to claims 11 and 14-18, and requests that the rejections of claims 24-29 be withdrawn.

Applicant believes the application is in condition for allowance and respectfully request the same.

IPSOLON LLP
805 SW BROADWAY #2740
PORTLAND, OREGON 97205
TEL. (503) 249-7066
FAX (503) 249-7068

Respectfully Submitted,


Mark M. Meininger
Registration No. 32,428